

# Annual Report 2016-2017

## Unity Church-Unitarian

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Coordinator of Communications  
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Facilities

## **In Memoriam**

### **Deborah Ruth**

August 23, 1952 – November 24, 2016

### **Sara Dorothy Langworthy**

June 9, 1960 – December 4, 2016

### **Virginia Gregg Greenman**

September 30, 1928–March 3, 2017

### **Davin Lewis Clausen-Sweet**

October 14, 2013 – April 24, 2017

### **Joseph Anton Kramer**

February 3, 1954 – June 1, 2017

### **Dorothy Hall McFarland**

April 11, 1908 – June 17, 2017

### **Romeyn Taylor**

January 9, 1926 – June 4, 2017

### **Sandra Vatassery**

July 28, 1946 – August 26, 2017

### **Craig Garrett**

June 28, 1947 – October 25, 2017

## 2016-2017 Annual Report

### Prepared by the Executive Team

We are pleased to present the 2016-17 Annual Report to the Congregation. It has been a challenging and fruitful year that brings to mind the closing lines of Adrienne Rich's great poem "Phantasia for Elvira Shatayev."

*We know now we have always been in danger  
down in our separateness  
and now up here together but till now  
we had not touched our strength...  
What does love mean  
what does it mean "to survive"...  
We will not live to settle for less  
We have dreamed of this all of our lives. (1974 adapted)*

In the wake of a profoundly divisive national election we, like many other progressive congregations, experienced a significant increase both in attendance and depth of commitment. Church members both old and new testify to the importance of having Unity to turn to as a place to calm their fears and foster new and abiding hope. The values we claim, the purposes and principles we practice, the growing sense of solidarity we experience, and the love that grows among us are needed more than ever now.

The Executive Team, at its August 2016 retreat, affirmed the key priorities we established the previous year. Informed by the results of the Annual Congregational Survey and monthly feedback from trustees and other church leaders we continue to focus on:

- Connections
- Life-span Religious Education
- Partnerships
- Racial Justice
- Staff Development/Transition

In each of these five priority areas we are tracking a series of initiatives we have determined are key to the effective fulfillment of the stated Ends of the congregation. New initiatives undertaken in the 2016-17 church year included establishing a mentor program to provide support and guidance for those seeking deeper involvement, developing a plan to upgrade the database, working to coordinate themes and curricula across the entire congregation, clarifying religious education staffing needs, maintaining and deepening relationships with partner organizations, living into our covenant with Above Every Name, strengthening our relationships with both the UUA and the Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance, developing a Beloved Community Staff Team to coordinate our racial justice and inclusion efforts, and working closely with the Transition Team of the Board of Trustees to provide for a thoughtful transition as five

senior members of our staff prepare for retirement. These and many other efforts underway are spelled out more thoroughly in the following pages.

It has been a particular joy to work with a considerate and deliberate Board of Trustees. They have been attentive to our work and generally supportive while at the same time taking an active and critical role in improving our performance. When we recognized and surfaced a series of accounting errors which required correction, the Board was both firm and measured in their response. We appreciate the formation of a board finance team whose primary job is to make sure the Board as a whole is well-equipped to fulfill its fiscal oversight responsibilities. And, as always, we are deeply grateful to our staff and the many volunteers whose grace and devotion are essential to the well-being of the church and of the ministry we share.

Respectfully,

Janne Eller-Isaacs

Rob Eller-Isaacs

Lisa Friedman

Barbara Hubbard

The Executive Team of Unity Church-Unitarian

**EXECUTIVE TEAM INTERPRETATION OF  
ENDS STATEMENTS 2014-2018  
V4-2016**

***If these things happen, how will people's lives be changed, and how do we measure the impact?***

***Within***

- 1. The people of Unity Church-Unitarian value a deeply meaningful, transforming liberal religious experience.**

*That which we value, we are willing to work on. This implies that our people will take a spiritual inventory, set personal goals, and engage in regular self-reflection. We understand the role of a supportive religious community in helping people to become more vulnerable and more courageous. We affirm that transformation comes from being fully present to the beauty and brokenness of the human condition.*

***Measures:***

- *Spirit Map / Annual Congregational survey*

***As individuals, we***

- a. Open ourselves to compassionate pastoral care in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.**

*We nurture an environment where people are able to be vulnerable and to enlist the support of the church. We foster a climate of acceptance and encouragement for vulnerability and courage in all of the communities within the church. As a result, people feel empowered to risk new ways of being in the world.*

***Measures:***

- *Analyze participation in formal support groups*
- *Number of Pastoral Care requests*
- *Participation in Embracing Meditations*

- b. Develop spiritual practices that nurture reverence and encourage diverse worship services rich in beauty, serenity, community and joy**

*We understand the development of individual spiritual practice to be an essential expectation of church involvement. Such practice builds our capacity for reverence and helps prepare us for a richer, more diverse worship experience. Both personal practice and congregational worship are fundamental to spiritual development.*

**Measures:**

- *Analyze participation in church-sponsored classes and workshops*
  - *Congregational surveys*
- c. Embrace our identity as Unitarian Universalists and live out the principles of our shared faith in our daily lives.**

*Congregants know and feel a part of the unfolding story of liberal religion and make use of our stated principles as a tool for self-reflection and action in the world.*

**Measures:**

- *Participation in Heritage Week, history classes, etc.*
  - *Participation in pilgrimage opportunities*
  - *Congregational surveys*
- d. Cultivate a spirit of curiosity and welcome, growing from a desire for authentic relationship.**

*By embodying a spirit of curiosity and respect as individuals, we create a radically hospitable church. Visitors and newcomers more easily find their place within the larger congregation and the church as a whole becomes a more spirited and welcoming community.*

**Measures:**

- *Collect visitor feedback on their experiences*
- *Participation in Pathway to Membership classes*
- *New member retention*
- *Congregational surveys – “Have you felt empowered to be a part of welcoming visitors and new members?”*

**Among**

**2. Unity Church-Unitarian is a community of welcome, reverence, and deep connection.**

*The Holy exists in relationships among people. Congregational participation is essential to the religious life because it opens us up to that experience of the Holy while holding us accountable to one another and our best intentions. When we are a welcoming, reverent, deeply-connected community, the Holy grows in our lives and in the world.*

**Measures:**

- *Dashboard report*
- *Congregational surveys*

**As a community, we**

**a. Sustain and encourage one another in love**

*An ever-expanding portion of the congregation embodies and takes up the pastoral ministry of the church, holding each other in vulnerable times, asking for help when we are in need, and celebrating one another's joys and accomplishments.*

**Measures:**

- *Participation in the pastoral ministries of the church (What really counts?)*
- *Congregational survey*
- *Focus groups (In times of need, do you turn to the church for help? Is it hard for you to ask for help, and why?)*

**b. Value our shared ministry and practice it with integrity**

*An ever-expanding circle of congregants invite and feel invited into shared ministry and understand that they are living it out in their daily lives and in the life of the congregation. Shared ministry is integral to their reflections on their own spiritual well-being and growth and is an openly acknowledged aspect of their religious identity.*

**Measures:**

- *Spirit Map*
- *Congregational survey*
- *Number of leaders able to share the core teachings of the church with others. Shared ministry has come to mean two things: 1) living out our values and 2) sharing our gifts and talents with the church.*

**c. Reach out to one another across differences and stand together in the face of injustice**

*We meet faith-to-faith, engaging our shared humanity in a way that honors the particularities of our differences and allows us to work in authentic partnership while facing the uneven effects of injustice.*

**Measures:**

- *Moral Owner interviews*
- *Participation in Community Outreach teams*
- *Participation in Anti-Racism / Anti-Oppression trainings and workshops*
- *Eagerness of outside organizations to partner with Unity Church*

**d. Foster a culture of open, inclusive leadership and meaningful engagement**

*The church is a learning community that empowers people to identify and live into their gifts. It's a place that encourages risk-taking, in which it is okay to try and fail, be forgiven, and try again. Present church leaders actively reach out*

*and recruit people they don't know into leadership, recognizing that the best interest of the church is served by a diverse and creative leadership corps.*

**Measures:**

- *Information about opportunities for leadership is readily available*
- *Robust candidate list for open positions*
- *Established teams include new leaders and broadly reflect the make-up of the congregation*
- *Congregational survey*

**e. Are generous with our time, talents, resources and creativity**

*There is a widely-shared sense of responsibility for the health and well-being of the church. People are fully engaged in the church and are optimistic about its efficacy in their lives and in the world. People bring their best selves to their work as volunteers. The generosity of the people of Unity Church is an expression of their gratitude for the ways in which the church informs and nourishes their lives. They are open to creative exploration, even and especially when they are in uncertain territory.*

**Measures:**

- *The Operating budget is adequately funded by a broad base of congregants*
- *Recruitment is easy because people wish to serve*
- *Volunteers report having a meaningful experience*
- *Congregational survey*
- *Newly imagined Gifts and Talents survey (moved from II.b.)*

**f. Are careful stewards of our resources and facilities.**

*Practices and decisions ensure the long-term strength and viability of Unity Church. Church facilities are well-maintained and green. We have a well-developed life-cycling program that helps us maintain and protect our facilities. Financial resources are well-managed. Opportunities for thoughtful reflection on generous participation are readily available.*

**Measures:**

- *Capital needs are addressed in a timely and thorough manner*
- *The budget balances at the end of the year*
- *Audits and financial reviews*
- *Participation in reflection on generosity*

## **Beyond**

3. **Unity Church-Unitarian carries out the work of love in community, making a positive impact in our neighborhood and in our world. Grounded in the transforming power of our faith, we**

*Our congregation's work for justice is a natural expression of our inward work and our experience of religious community. Our faith affirms that God's love is for everyone and that the choices we make shape both our lives and the world. The experience of the Holy inspires and sustains a sacred obligation to work for justice. In the work we do, we are seeking to live out God's love in the world. We seek to strengthen and expand our practice of partnership for positive change.*

### **Measures:**

- *Organizational partnerships*
- *Grants-making*
- *Congregational survey*
- *Moral Owner interviews*
- *Depth and breadth of participation in community outreach teams*

- a. **Open our doors and our hearts to those who seek comfort, courage, and meaning**

*Unity Church is a place where the larger community knows it is welcome in times of public grief, sorrow and celebration. We provide space and volunteer support for innovative responses to community needs with an emphasis on marginalized communities, including communities of color.*

### **Measures:**

- *Building use report*
- *Moral Owner interviews*
- *Participation in special services and rites of passage*

- b. **Build authentic relationships with people across differences, in the spirit of humility and reverence**

*We meet faith-to-faith, engaging our shared humanity in a way that honors the particularities of our differences and allows us to work in authentic partnership while facing the uneven effects of injustice.*

### **Measures:**

- *Moral Owner interviews*
- *Participation in Community Outreach teams*
- *Participation in Anti-Racism / Anti-Oppression trainings and workshops*
- *Eagerness of outside organizations to partner with Unity Church*

**c. Live out our commitment to racial reconciliation and to dismantling racism**

*We recognize the “tragic gap” of racial disparity in our community and in our nation. We know the disparity is systemic and that any progress in dismantling it requires both institutional and personal action. Inspired by the theological mandate that we work toward the realization of the Beloved Community, we pursue the mission of the church, keeping the work to dismantle racism and oppression at the heart of our agenda. This is difficult work and we cannot do it alone. Our commitment to partner with people and communities of color outside the church does not deny the diversity already among us.*

**Measures:**

- *Moral Owner interviews*
- *Participation in Community Outreach teams*
- *Annual Congregational Survey*
- *ARLT Annual Report*

**d. Serve as a trusted and visible leader, partner, and advocate for the creation of a just society and a sustainable environment**

*The “prophetic imperative” calls us to be partners in seeking to make the Beloved Community real. Oppressions, including the destruction of our environment are linked and affect us all. We recognize that the crisis of climate change calls us to act immediately to protect affected communities, the earth and future generations. We understand that “the arc of the moral universe is long.” Trust grows out of long term partnership. We commit to keep showing up, to serve, to learn and to be advocates for positive change.*

**Measures:**

- *Moral Owner interviews*
- *Monitor Policy J. Insert into the Board’s monitoring calendar a schedule for reporting on ET Limitation # II.J*
- *Participation in Community Outreach teams*
- *Annual Congregational Survey*

**e. Participate actively in the larger Unitarian Universalist community.**

*We support those who seek a larger context in which to claim their UU identity. Unity will continue to be an influential congregation that leads, inspires, connects with and learns from other Unitarian Universalist communities. We will continue to be a teaching congregation and a working partner with other congregations in our area and across the Association.*

**Measures:**

- *Maintain and expand Unity Consulting*
- *Volunteer involvement in larger UU activities*
- *Financial contributions*
- *Congregational Survey – increase the congregation’s awareness of our current involvement in / contributions to the larger movement*

## 2017 Congregational Survey Results Board of Trustees Summary

There's strong support at Unity Church for how the church is doing at achieving its goals or "Ends." That's one of several conclusions supported by the results of the annual congregational survey, which 272 Unity members completed this spring. The Board of Trustees, the Executive Team and the whole congregation benefit from this invaluable resource; we are grateful that so many of our fellow members take the time to respond.

For the Board of Trustees, here are some of the survey results that stood out for us this year.

1. The survey reveals a high degree of loyalty to Unity Church among the respondents. In response to the question "would you recommend the church to a friend or relative?" 78 percent gave a strongly positive rating. With confidence in institutions eroding generally, it is heartening that the strength of reported loyalty to the church has increased steadily over the last 10 years.
2. The survey asked members to rate Unity's progress toward each of 15 specific Ends, which are grouped into the three categories — within (in our individual spiritual lives), among (in our relationships to each other), and beyond (in our engagement with the broader community and world). For each of those three categories (and for each of the 15 individual ends), the average ratings were above four on a five point scale. This reflects strong support for how well Unity Church is doing at meeting our Ends.
3. While the responses were strong overall, some goals received noticeably higher or lower results, differences that are statistically significant to a 95% degree of confidence. These differences demonstrate that perceptions of our success on meeting a specific end can vary quite significantly within a category.
  - The higher results: Serve as a trusted and visible leader, partner, and advocate for the creation of a just society and a sustainable environment (beyond); Open our doors and our hearts to those who seek comfort, courage, and meaning (beyond); Are generous with our time, talents, resources, and creativity (among); Are careful stewards of our resources and facilities (among)
  - The lower results: Build authentic relationships with people across differences, in the spirit of humility and reverence (beyond); Sustain and encourage one another in love (among); Value our shared ministry and practice it with integrity (among); Participate actively in the larger Unitarian Universalist community (beyond).
4. While the average ratings for the three categories (within, among and beyond) were relatively similar across the categories, we did see somewhat stronger results for the beyond-related Ends, compared to the within- and among-related Ends. This sustains a pattern that has emerged in recent years, with the ratings for the beyond-related Ends

increasing steadily to have parity with the other two areas. Comparing specifically the within-related ends and the beyond-related Ends, this is the first time in a nine year stretch where the beyond End evaluations were higher than the within end evaluations, albeit by a small amount. This trend suggests a perceptual shift, that our inward and outward ministries are now more in balance.

5. For the survey as a whole, we saw lower scores overall compared to 2016, although scores were similar to the results from 2014 and 2015. (Factors that could be contributing to the change include the longer time it took to complete the 2016 survey, as well as the more stressful political environment, which could trigger perceptions that there's more for Unity Church to take on in this context.) While the Board does not see the drop for 2016 as a cause of concern, we will be watching for how things shape up in this regard next year.
6. There were some variations in the results among different groups within the church. The Board considers these variations to better understand the perspectives of different groups within the congregation.
  - White families gave higher ratings than those who identify as families of color.
  - Older respondents gave higher ratings than those who are younger.
  - Respondents with no children at home gave higher ratings than those with children at home.
  - Respondents who pledge financial support to the church gave higher ratings than those who did not.
  - Respondents who attend worship services more than one time a month gave higher ratings than those who attend just once a month.

One way the survey results have already been used this year is in helping the Board plan for renewal of Unity's Ends statements in 2018. The renewal process focuses on a "powerful question" that the Board and Executive Team discerned, in part, from the survey responses. The church's Executive Team reviewed the survey results as well, and uses the results to inform church programming for the coming year. The portion of the survey that asked about spiritual priorities — the set of Spirit Map questions — is particularly helpful for the Executive Team.

The value in the survey is not just in the numerical results, but also in the comments that are shared. The Board reads through all of the comments, deepening our understanding of the responses.

### **Sharing results**

This summary and detailed reporting of the survey results are shared with the congregation. That happens through an e-mail in October, the website, the Congregational Meeting in November and Wellspring Wednesday sessions in the fall.

**Seeking feedback**

Share any thoughts you have about the survey with any of the trustees. You can find our contact information on the Unity website ([unityunitarian.org](http://unityunitarian.org)) or stop us when you see us at church.

*The Board of Trustees appreciates the critical roles Laura Park and Bill Etter play in completing this project and analyzing the results.*

Footnote: The Board of Trustees is charged with the responsibility of monitoring progress toward meeting the 2014-2018 Ends. These Ends were approved by the congregation and guide the work of the Executive Team and others as they focus on providing opportunities to explore in the life of a Unity Church congregant. One important tool available for monitoring the Ends is the congregational survey.

## **Worship Life**

Worship remains the center of congregational life. The maturing of our theme-based approach has allowed both worship leaders and the congregation to deepen their exploration of diverse dimensions and perspectives relating to our spiritual lives while continuing to live into our commitment to be an influential and credible partner for positive social change.

No significant changes in liturgy were initiated over the course of the 2016-17 church year. The worship planning team, including the Associates, shared a strong sense that the challenges emerging from the 2016 national elections called for consistency and comfort as opposed to experimentation. The team also did its utmost to address controversial concerns that arose from the campaigns and the election results with as much balance and respect for differing opinion as integrity allowed. Responding to the needs of the community, a weekly Still Point service was offered in the Ames Chapel.

Worship highlights this year included shared opportunities for deepening the relations between Unity Church and Above Every Name (AEN). In addition to our now traditional shared Christmas Eve service we gathered in the Ames Chapel for a ritual of confession followed by an Above Every Name communion service at which AEN welcomed more than a hundred participants from Unity Church. Pastor Danny Givens, Jr., has also continued to lead the Wellspring Wednesday worship service once a month. Services, including the Wellspring Wednesday multi-generational service, have been well attended. Attendance at the 4:30 service continues to fluctuate making it somewhat difficult to sustain the number of volunteer teachers needed to maintain an effective religious education program.

Our worship associates program continues to flourish. The depth of our “state of the church” conversations and the entire worship planning process has become one of the primary ways for participants to encounter and embrace the teachings of the church.

## Pastoral Care

The pastoral care program seeks to serve people in times of need, crisis, transition, grief and loss. Overseen by Janne Eller-Isaacs, the interns and a team of remarkable pastoral care associates provide a caring ministry of presence for our members and friends.

The heart of the program is best expressed in the Embracing meditation each Sunday. This essential part of our worship always contains the joys and sorrows of people who are willing to share their tender news with the larger congregation. The embracing meditation is read at the weekly staff meeting, the adult service, children's Chapel and with the preschoolers in Spirit Play. It is also placed on the pastoral care table in the Parish Hall during coffee hour. There, the entire congregation is invited to send cards of care, concern and congratulations to those listed each week.

We begin first with the U-Knitarians who knit comfort shawls throughout the year. The shawls are then finished by shawl coordinator, Carol Miller. She delivers them to the pastoral care meeting where they are blessed by all the members there. Our comfort shawls have been delivered to over 35 people this year. This year, for the first time, members asked for shawls for non-Unity friends and family. We also shared comfort shawls with members of Above Every Name who were living through challenging times in their lives.

The pastoral care team meets monthly throughout the year to receive training, support one another, share ideas and to ensure that everyone in need is served adequately. Monthly meetings often focus on a particular theme or pastoral issue. This past year the pastoral care team participated in informational meetings or trainings at most of our meetings. We even went off site to meet with a grief counselor in an event sponsored by Bradshaw Funeral Services.

We always work to hone our listening skills because they are at the heart of the ministry of presence we seek to provide everyone with whom we come in contact.

This year we invited the congregation once again to volunteer in our Caring Circle. The caring circle seeks to provide one time services which include things like rides, meal preparation and delivery, child care, respite care, shopping and errand running, and house projects. The Caring Circle is designed to allow for more practical kinds of support to be offered to members and friends who need things that are offered generously from their fellow congregants. 140 people signed up. This part of the pastoral care program is often invisible and yet it serves many of our folks who are in need of practical support. The services offered by the Caring Circle became an essential piece when creating a team approach for the numerous services that are needed by a particular individual.

The program continues to grow in scope and depth. The gender balance of the care givers has been achieved with men playing a vital role in the program.

Janne Eller-Isaacs and Cynthia Orange continue to co-facilitate a once a month support group for caregivers that has provided a place of mutual support and encouragement for the caretakers who attend. This group continues to grow in numbers and commitment. It continues to include people from other congregations who are in need of the support it offers, since this offering is not available in the congregations they attend.

We are so proud that Cynthia Orange, at the behest of Hazelden, wrote a book on caregiving that came out this year. *Take Good Care: Finding Joy in Compassionate Caregiving* is a must read for anyone who is a caregiver. Cynthia brings the same wisdom that so benefits the group to her writing as well.

The grief group continues as a monthly drop in resource. There is a core of regular attenders who seek to welcome all newcomers. Co-facilitated by Janne Eller-Isaacs and Linda Kjerland, an environment of mutual support and understanding is available to anyone walking the journey of grief.

Given the cross pollination continuing this year between Above Every Name and Unity Church through shared worship and other rituals and opportunities for connecting, some pastoral care was offered to members of these congregations through the ministers and participants. We hope this will continue into the future.

Lastly, I would like to close this annual report with great appreciation for the Memorial Service team. Coordinated by Barbara Ford, they seek to provide a calm and lovely reception after memorial services. Barbara recruits bakers who bake cookies which are delivered to the church. Another group then sets up a lovely reception. Though designed for Unity Church members they have been especially generous in also getting cookies and bars for services for non-Unity members and friends.

## Congregational and Community Engagement

### Membership

In February, Unity Church certified 904 voting members with the Unitarian Universalist Association. Since July 1, 2016, Unity has welcomed 57 new members and their families.

Unity continued the Faith Forward curriculum pilot from First Unitarian Church of Dallas, Texas, which provides a comprehensive adult religious education path for visitors to grow into members and congregational leaders. The UU Elevator Speech class offered as part of this series was extremely well-received. All available Faith Forward courses will be offered at least once in the 2017-18 program year.

Finding Yourself at Unity was offered as a drop-in weekly Sunday class, including the summer, reaching many more visitors than before. It is led by a dedicated group of volunteer facilitators working with staff presenters. In the spring a new Mentor Program was launched for active visitors and new members, developed by Janne Eller-Isaacs, Lisa Friedman, Signe Nestingen, and Susan Huehn. Over 35 people trained as mentors. Each mentor is matched with a mentee for a period of six months to help them connect more deeply with the congregation and opportunities for involvement. The Mentor committee continues to develop and support this new membership ministry.

New members include:

- |                              |                                 |                            |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Molly Westerman           | 21. Kayla Johnson               | 40. Laura Duke             |
| 2. Eric Weber                | 22. Loralee J. Bloom            | Lundgren                   |
| 3. John E. Boatright         | 23. Carol K. Mahnke             | 41. Thomas Allen Duke      |
| 4. Kathleen N. Park          | 24. Thomas B. Zell              | 42. Jean Hammink           |
| 5. Denison Hansen            | 25. Clover Earl                 | 43. Peter Rudrud           |
| 6. Julie Lindholm            | 26. Ian S. Evison               | 44. Barry Ray Byram        |
| 7. Marta Wall                | 27. Leah Evison                 | 45. Anthony R. McKay       |
| 8. Sarah Crawford            | 28. Phyllis H. Sherman          | 46. Ariel Currie           |
| 9. Megan Brogger             | 29. Margo Riskedahl             | 47. Erik Stromberg         |
| 10. Patricia<br>Christiansen | 30. Jayme Moore<br>Turechek     | 48. Gregory<br>Hellenbrand |
| 11. John M.<br>Christiansen  | 31. Allen Turechek              | 49. Helen Douville         |
| 12. Jennifer Bjorhus         | 32. Jennifer Tong               | 50. Diane M. Grasse        |
| 13. Sue Behrends             | 33. Teresa Kothbauer            | 51. Peter B. Grasse        |
| 14. Bruce Behrends           | 34. Elen Bahr                   | 52. Alexander D.<br>Askew  |
| 15. Ann LaBree Russell       | 35. Jonathan F.<br>Vaughan-Fier | 53. Nila Gouldin           |
| 16. Maxine Behm              | 36. Derek Harris                | 54. Metric M. Giles I      |
| 17. Jon Behm                 | 37. Ed Caldie                   | 55. Jess Landgraf          |
| 18. Vicki Lofquist           | 38. Tomkin Coleman              | 56. Katrina Nichols        |
| 19. Bernie Troje             | 39. Julie Coleman               | 57. Maria Verve            |
| 20. Hans Hagge               |                                 |                            |

Unity's Welcome Teams create a vital ministry of hospitality at every worship service held throughout the year. Over 65 people served on one of the 12 welcome teams, coordinated by Madeline Summers. Eight new members joined the teams and many volunteered as substitutes. In addition to their Sunday support, Welcome Team members made time to attend training in hospitality, talking with visitors, and emergency preparedness. A spring appreciation party was held for all welcome team members. Russell Peterson Sharon Guiser, Kathy Schur, Anne Parker, Mary Pollard and Mary Dunn retired as Welcome Team Members. We offer our deep gratitude for their dedicated service.

### **Adult Religious Education and Programming**

Unity's adult programming and mid-week congregational life continued to grow and thrive. Adult Religious Education opportunities increased and Wellspring Wednesday program represented 25% of all offerings. Attendance at Wellspring Wednesday grew this year and sought to expand its appeal to all ages, as well as to anchor Unity's anti-racism, anti-oppression education for the larger community. Additionally, Wednesdays provided time to deepen the partnership between Unity Church and Above Every Name Ministries as the two congregations held more joint worship and programming. Presentations such as "A Good Time for the Truth" with Minnesota author Sun Yung Shin, "Brother Outsider" with One Voice Mixed Chorus, "Reframing the Dialogue: Racism and Police Violence" with the University of Minnesota Institute for Advanced Study and Center for Bioethics, and workshops with Stepping Stone Theatre, among others, reflect a broad range of Unity's partnerships in the wider community. Deep appreciation goes out to the many Unity teams, including Community Outreach, Library/Bookstall, ARLT, the Art Team, and other members who sponsor speakers and suggest topics for this rich and diverse learning.

Unity aims to provide adult religious education that encourages the development of personal spiritual practice, opportunities for small group growth and connection, and support for living out our values in the larger world. Annual classes such as Working Towards Prayer with Rob Eller-Isaacs, the Committed Couples class with Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs, the Threshold series with Karen Hering, Group Spiritual Direction and a Spiritual Practices Retreat with Sarah Cledwyn, are among the anchoring curricula for these goals. The ninth annual Women's Retreat was held with over 100 people in attendance and the first Men's Retreat in several years was held with enthusiastic participation. Several new programs were offered in the 2016-17 year including the Old Strong Stories Bible Study, Non-Violent Communication training and group work, Beloved Conversations III, Finding and Keeping Your Balance: Recovering from a Harsh Election Season, UU Pilgrimage, a showing of the new documentary *Defying the Nazi's: the Sharps War* and more. In a new, emerging partnership with Wisdom Ways, Unity Church hosted "When Silence Speaks" with Naomi Shihab Nye and Sara Thomsen. Over 300 people attended the White Supremacy Teach-Ins this past May, in solidarity with the UUA.

Unity Church also promotes social opportunities outside of Sunday to deepen community. Over 120 people met monthly for a meal in each other's homes through the Dine with Nine program. The young adult group grew with the support of ministerial intern, Nic Cable. Three new support groups emerged this year, meeting regularly and offering community: the LGBTQ+

group, the Addictions and Recovery Ministry group, and the Christian Fellowship. Summer fellowship continued to be popular including family yoga, pancake breakfasts, nature walks, baseball at the St. Paul Saints, and a new monthly film series on race.

### **Food Ministry**

Unity's food ministry thrived this year under the skilled leadership of Madeline Summers. Of the 90 people who helped prepare Soup Suppers and Wellspring Wednesday dinners, 15 were new, including seven children. We had three regular soup cooking teams and were well supported by our Coming of Age families, whose collective hospitality anchors our 4:30 pm. congregation. We had four Wellspring Wednesday teams, whose delicious and creative meals nourish our mid-week congregation. Our WW team leaders play a particularly vital role, volunteering on average 15 hours/month to this ministry. Overall the number of total volunteers was lower, but the involvement of each individual increased. Volunteers dedicated 10-20 hours per month rather than 5-8 in previous years. Thank you to all who participated in making Unity's food ministry a success!

### **Recovery Ministry**

The recovery ministry met monthly this past year. The meetings help to foster community and support for those in recovery. Attendance was large in the beginning and small towards the last meeting. Within Unity Church there is a large amount of people in recovery, and further opportunities for them to gather were requested.

### **Elders Circle**

The Elders Circle was a thriving group this past year. We had presentations from local organizations, the Unity Art Team, co-ministers Rob and Janne, and Laura Park, Managing Director of Unity Consulting. During this year fruitful discussions and shared community was fostered among participants. Through the sharing of stories people were able to engage with each other, and with the complexities and blessings of aging.

## **Community Outreach Ministry**

Over 150 people actively participate in monthly meetings of Unity's Community Outreach Teams. They, in turn, lead the congregation in many avenues of activism -- education, advocacy, service, and spiritual reflection. What follows is a brief summary of highlights from each team's year. In addition to these partnerships, Unity Church also took on a leading role in the October 2016 Twin Cities Revival with Dr. William J. Barber II. Unity also hosted an all-day interfaith activist training with Dr. Barber and the Moral Monday Movement.

### **Affordable Housing Ministry Team**

*Community Partners: Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, St. Paul Interfaith Action Project Home, and Faith Builders Habitat for Humanity Collaboration.*

The team partnered with the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative in the successful opening of Prior Crossing, which provides 44 youth housing units in St. Paul. Having participated in the advocacy which secured the project funding, Unity Church members donated and organized the needed supplies to furnish the new apartments. Unity served on the Prior Crossing Volunteer Committee with other supporting congregations to respond to program requests from the residents, assisting in providing opportunities for art, gardening, and other initiatives. Unity was also invited to participate in Beacon's Strategic Planning process with their stakeholders. In May, the congregation once again hosted homeless families through Project Home, with the assistance of over 150 overnight and evening volunteers. The expanded leadership team recruited for all shifts, provided volunteer training and support, and introduced a Parish Hall opportunity to create meal packets for the homeless. In the summer, Unity volunteers joined the two week Faith Builders Habitat for Humanity Build and raised money for the project selling parking spots at Grand Old Days.

### **Evergreen Projects Ministry**

*Community Partners: Family Place, Hallie Q Brown Foodshelf, St. Paul Jeremiah Program.*

The Evergreen Project continued to create art and beauty in the service of women, children, and families. The team raised funds for their partners through their annual holiday and Mother's Day sales and coordinated monthly meals for the Jeremiah Program community. After the closing of Sharing Korner's Foodshelf, the team established a new relationship with the Hallie Q Brown Foodshelf, who now receives Unity's support and regular food donations.

### **Generosity Ministry Team**

In October, Unity celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its Generosity Ministry with a reverse offering. As of the 10 year mark, Unity held over 532 generosity offerings, raising more than \$1 million and giving away more than \$776,600. Each person present at the October 16 service received an envelope with \$20, with which they were invited to do some good in the world. Members sent back wonderful stories of how they spread this generosity in the wider community.

From July 1, 2016 – June 30 2017, \$97,477 was donated to worthy causes and organizations. The Generosity Ministry Team vets nominations for the offering and schedules the offering

recipients for every service of the church year. The team sets a budget guideline for nominated organizations in order to prioritize smaller organizations for whom a Unity offering would make significant impact.

### **Mano a Mano Ministry Team (“Hand to Hand” in Spanish)**

*Community Partner: Mano a Mano International Partners*

Mano a Mano continues to strengthen the many ways it serves the citizens of rural Bolivia. Unity members participated in trips to Bolivia to assist in the new warehouse for medical supplies, to continue a partnership in teacher training, and more. The December craft fair and January re-gifting sale are important fundraisers. In February, Mano a Mano joined with the Library Team to host Mano a Mano Stories: A Book Reading and Conversation of *La Familia: An International Love Story* with author Dr. Mary Martin. Mano a Mano hosts regular “soup and sort” nights each month where volunteers sift through donated medical supplies before they are shipped Bolivia.

### **Obama Elementary School Partnership**

Unity’s partnership with Obama Elementary School continues to grow in depth and breadth. Unity Church hosted Obama staff and teachers for their August planning week and welcomed them with a pancake breakfast. Volunteers worked with students in grades 1-4 in reading and math through a new, in-house program. Unity members also assisted in the school library, helping to organize and reshelv books to keep them in ongoing circulation. Fundraising efforts supported the principal’s Sunshine Fund and other special programs. There is mutual interest in learning from each other’s racial equity efforts.

### **Partner Church Ministry Team**

The Partner Church Team sponsored a November program on “15 Years of Learning How to be Pilgrims in Transylvania” reflecting the insights gained from the over 106 people who have visited Unity’s partner village of Homorodszentpeter, Romania, since 2001. Planning began for the summer 2017 visit of Rev. Kinga Reka Szekely and her family and for the 2018 pilgrimage which will occur during the celebration of the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Edict of Torda.

### **Rainbow Chalice Alliance Ministry Team**

*Community Partners: Minnesota School Outreach Coalition (MnSOC), Out for Equity, Trans Forming Families Minnesota*

The team continued to be one of the main supporters of the annual MnSOC Q-Quest conferences for over 500 LGBTQA high school and middle school students from across the state. The RCA also raised significant funds for the fourth annual community LGBTQ spring school proms, through the much-in-demand Unity Pi Day Pie Sale. The team organized and facilitated a Wellspring Wednesday program on Gender Identity and Parenting and took a lead role in organizing Unity’s presence with other UU’s at the annual Twin Cities Pride Parade. The RCA also forged a new partnership with Trans Forming Families Minnesota and Unity Church has become the meeting location for the monthly gathering of St. Paul TFF families.

### **Racial and Restorative Justice Ministry Team**

*Community Partners: Amicus (Second Chance Coalition), Rondo Circle of Peace, Children's Defense Fund Freedom School, Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance*

In July 2016 the team joined the celebration of the 300<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Monday Night Circle of Peace at Unity Church. The team supported the work and growth of the Circle of Peace Movement throughout the year. With Amicus, they ran a hugely successful Winter Warm Up Drive for clothing, sundries, and other basic necessities for men and women just getting out of prison and several members attended the annual prison mentorship conference. Many Unity Church members are active in one on one mentoring and pen friends through Amicus programs. The team volunteered at the Second Chance Coalition Day on the Hill, advocating for restoring the right to vote to people who have served their prison sentences. The team also coordinated Unity volunteers in a variety of roles in the six-week 2016 Children's Defense Fund Freedom School, an enrichment school for over 350 children, predominantly children of color. The team partnered with the Library/Bookstall and Anti-Racism Leadership teams in selecting "*All the Real Indians Died Off*" and *Other Myths about Native Americans* by Dina Gilio-Whitaker and Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz as the all congregation book read and facilitating discussion groups. The team supported Unity's partnership with the St. Paul Interfaith Network and the organizing of a Healing Minnesota Dakota Sacred Sites tour with 25 Unity members. The team also worked in solidarity with the congregation and larger community in the aftermath of the murder of Philando Castile.

### **Sanctuary Team**

*Community Partner: ISAIAH*

After the November election, Unity Church joined other metro-area congregations and ISAIAH in reinvigorating the local Sanctuary movement. With the leadership of Janne Eller-Isaacs and Nic Cable, Unity members formed a new Community Outreach Team to educate about immigration issues in our community, to prepare to become a Sanctuary congregation, and to advocate for more just, inclusive policy on a local and national level. Unity hosted rapid response training, and also transformed a lower level religious education classroom into a small apartment. A shower was installed in a nearby bathroom, through the generosity of skilled Unity members.

### **Sustainable Living Team**

*Community Partner: Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light*

The team continued to lead Unity's composting efforts, increasing the volunteer base and coordinating with Unity staff and food ministry volunteers. They promoted programming on the Save the Boundary Waters campaign and other educational opportunities on climate change. Continuing their efforts to transform Unity Church into a green institution, they sponsored a spring water bottle sale which raised the funds needed to install a water bottle refill station near the Parish Hall. They organized community clean up outings, supported Unity's children's garden summer ministry, and grew the spring plant exchange.

## Literary Ministries

The congregation continued to offer monthly Open Page guided writing sessions led by Consulting Literary Minister Rev. Karen Hering as invitations for members and friends of the congregation to reflect on the monthly worship themes. We also offered another Thresholds Series for 18 participants crossing significant thresholds in their personal lives. Participants met for four sessions led by Karen Hering in January and February, engaging writing and other practices to reflect on their personal thresholds and to support one another crossing their own. At the end of the series, the participants were blessed by the congregation in worship with a litany for all those who are in the midst of great change.

Our dedicated *Cairns* committee led by Shelley Butler, Editor, and Rev. Karen Hering, created Volume 8 of “The Unity Church Journal of the Arts” in 2016. This amazing journal includes artwork and writings from the archives, the pulpit, ministers, staff members, and members of Unity Church.

In addition to *Cairns*, our Library and Bookstall Ministry Team led by Barb Foss, Janice Gestner, and Shelley Butler continued to enhance our collection and sponsored well received public readings, author events, and Café Unity during the year. Their commitment and creativity continue to enrich us all.

## Music Ministry

Unity Choir, Unity Singers, Women's Ensemble, Children's Choir, Unity music staff, and varied guests brought consistent musical offerings to all three of our services again this season. Choir rotation continues to include all three services, offering a choral presence in each service, on average, three Sundays a month.

Our choir programs continually involve 170-180 people during the year. Music ministry is a vibrant and rich community spanning all ages.

Efforts to make connections through music with our local community and wider UUA community were realized through the following:

- a. The Unity Singers sang at the 50th anniversary celebration of Model Cities held at Camphor United Methodist Church, March 12, 2017. Unity Church was invited to participate because of our long involvement and previous participation by Unity Choir.
- b. All choirs continue expansion of multi-cultural repertoire with works from varied sources.
- c. Women's Ensemble grew to 60 members by the end of the year, continuing with several mother-daughter teams.
- d. The Children's Choir brought a special program of music to the Episcopal Homes in their annual concert there.

Our 10:00 p.m. Candlelight Choir continues to expand as a continuing tradition of our Christmas Eve service offerings along with two Christmas Pageants (which include Adult and children's choral support), and music for all other services.

Our 2017 Arthur Foote Music Sunday continued this great tradition of music in our church community. This year we were delighted to welcome guest conductor Dale Warland who conducted and worked with the choirs on several combined selections. All choirs participated.

Participation continues to grow in the highly successful Children's Musical (28th year) directed by Sandy Waterman and Mary Blouin Auffert. This opportunity for three years of involvement, 6th-8th grades, continues the arc of offerings for our children with Children's Choir (grades 1 through 5) and Children's Musical (grades 6 through 8).

Our Holiday Concert and Carol Sing continue to be attended with standing room only audience. Family and friends new to Unity Church are a large part of our audience. All choirs participated.

Unity Church volunteer musicians continue to enrich our services throughout the year and, in particular, during our summer services under the direction of summer music coordinator, Kathleen Bartholomay. Their commitment and generosity is a huge gift to all.

Our choir program continues to be not just an opportunity for involvement but an entrance into this community. Many people establish their relationship with Unity Church through participation in one of our choirs before becoming members.

## Ministry with Children and Youth

Paraphrasing the *observer effect* well-known in physics, children are revealed to us not as they are but by our pedagogical gaze. And for sacred pedagogy and the work of faith formation, the primary mode of perception is theology. If conditions that made faith a natural and visible response to our everyday life have changed and made largely peripheral today, a determined focus for Religious Education centers on the retrieval and recuperation of ministry from the care of social sciences and returning it to its theological home. Our theological ground—including rituals, practices, language, history, concepts—not only safeguards ministry from capitulating to every trendsetting social science or social service but instructs our ability to bend toward the Sacred in a rapidly changing world. Faith may manifest as the grace and courage to engage with our world, but theology is the disciplined discernment and commentary upon our life of faith. Theology lives between our enduring sacred stories and the world's ever-changing account of itself. Theology is what happens when those stories meet.

An underlying focus this year sought to make our values, commitments, and practices in Religious Education more theologically visible, and claim a more meaningful ministry conceived by a richer theological imagination. Conversations among members of the Religious Education Ministry Team, community of teachers, and RE staff challenged presumed necessities, perspectives, and givens about religious education, especially about the roles and responsibilities of teachers:

- Are teachers those who *lead programs*, or those who *share in ministry*?
- Are teachers *assigned* to a program, or *called* to a community of children?
- Are teachers focused on the *what* (activity), or attentive to the *who* (relationships)?
- Is our work a *limited commitment* to task completion, or a *covenantal commitment* to lifelong faith journey?
- Is religious education a method of *socializing* children, or method of *evangelizing* children (literally “sharing good news”) of a greater truth, goodness, and beauty?
- Does our work reflect an attitude of *therefore*, or attitude of *nevertheless*?
- Is the purpose about *meeting needs*, or about *loving children*?

In practice, of course, there is rarely a clear demarcation on the continuum. Yet the theological distinctions help clarify and manifest a yearning that pulses at the heart of religious education: that our parents and teachers are *spiritual guides* engaged in *ministry* with our children and youth.

The ongoing initiatives in RE's multiyear vision are shaped by our theology of ministry with children and youth, and they expand on aims drawn from the church's *Ends Statement 2014-18*, including the following:

- Advancing our commitment to racial justice through curriculum development. Following recommendations from a task force on curriculum review, curriculum development towards critical multicultural education and racial justice began with updating the *UU Identity and History* course to be made available for class fall/2017. Co-leaders Kelley Nelson and Mike Huber (REMT) continue to lead the development of a new racial justice curriculum to be piloted fall/2018.
- Concurrent with curriculum development, teacher training on intercultural competence as a focal measure of advancing critical multicultural education. The effective majority of teachers is anticipated to participate in the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) workshop in early September/2017.
- Supporting teachers in their *ministry of relational learning* with children and families, including: continued growing number of teachers who assumed teaching for the entire RE year, normalizing the semester as the basic time commitment, and for our Spirit Play and Rotations programs, inviting more teachers into the practice “documenting” children’s learning in weekly communications shared with parents.
- Designing sustained parent involvement throughout RE programs, including *Our Whole Lives*, *Coming of Age*, and *Tower Club* programs. Beyond the professionalization of RE that tipped the scale toward congregational settings and professional instruction in age-specific groups, modern culture and attendance patterns strongly indicate that home must be reclaimed as the critical place of faith formation. Alongside the invaluable ministry of the *UU Families Initiative* and family rituals work, organizing parent leadership continues to evolve as a significant criteria and claim on how we do religious education.
- Strengthening RE staffing for emerging ministries, notably in (1) expanding Drew Danielson’s hours to integrate ministry with Tweens on Wednesday evenings – with children from both Unity Church and Above Every Name participating, and (2) hiring Audrey Hommeyer as Nursery Coordinator and newest addition to nursery staff.

Our values, commitments, and practices manifest at different levels of observability. For Religious Education, our reach for a richer theological imagination sought to make more visible the faith journeys of our children for whom theology is about symbols and sacred stories deeply lived. In a rapidly changing world, our children and youth rely on the faith community of parents and teachers to help them declare an account of who they are and make visible the sacred purpose for which they were born. I have such gratitude for the generous dedication of all those who hold children at the center of their spiritual practice, whose wise and steady patience in this remarkable collaboration make real our covenant.

## **Ministerial Interns: Jessica Clay and Nic Cable**

Unity Church values its role as a teaching congregation to future ministers. In the 2016-17, Unity was enriched by the ministries of two dynamic and creative interns. Jessica Clay served as the Hallman Ministerial Intern, coming from Starr King School for the Ministry. Nic Cable served as Unity's second Ministerial Intern, coming from the UUA staff and Chicago Theological School. Both interns were supervised by Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs and supported in their growth by two Ministerial Internship Support Teams. Jessica's team members were Barbara Ford (chair), Eric Hendrickson, Alana Howey, Mary Pickard and Drew Ross. Nic's team members were Don Brunnuell (chair), Phyl Ostergren, Jess Landgraf, Nancy Heege, Kirsten Fischer and Nick Foster-Walters.

The interns contributed to Unity's ministry in many ways: leading Sunday and Wellspring Wednesday worship, officiating at rites of passage, providing pastoral care, and volunteering the religious education program, and much more.

Each intern also brought their unique gifts to their ministry at Unity. Jessica Clay facilitated the Elders' Circle and also worked closely with Unity's Recovery Ministry. She was a co-leader of the third course of Beloved Conversations offered at Unity Church and developed a six session class on Unitarian Universalist Pilgrimage. She also researched and coordinated a speaker series on Islam and Muslims in Minnesota. Jessica worked closely with Unity's Anti-racism, anti-oppression efforts and presented to the pastoral care associates on gender inclusion. She organized and led the UU buses to the Washington Women's March in January and shaped its experience of communal pilgrimage. She was part of the core planning team for the White Supremacy Teach-Ins held in May. In the spring, she accepted the call to serve as the minister of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Brewster, MA.

Nic Cable brought his UUA fundraising experience to the planning of the fall canvass. He co-led the Beloved Conversations class with Jessica. He worked closely with the Young Adult Group, reinvigorating the community and cultivating shared leadership. He recruited a core planning team and helped organize the first Men's Retreat held at Unity Church in the past six years. Nic and Janne Eller-Isaacs led Unity's efforts to become a Sanctuary Church and the new partnership with ISAIAH. In the spring, he accepted the call to serve as the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbus, Indiana.

## Unity Consulting

Unity Consulting is a program of Unity Church whose mission is to liberate and empower the leadership of progressive religious congregations and institutions to awaken compassion, transform lives, and bless the world. We help congregations articulate the difference they seek to make in the world and then align their work and ministries to enable them to make that difference. Our primary tool is Policy Governance® as we've learned to adapt it for congregations.

Five percent of Unity Consulting's fees go to support Unity Church's operating budget. Unity Consulting also provides pro-bono services to the denomination through governance consulting with denominational and congregational leaders.

Highlights from this past year's work include:

- Continued work to grow Spirit Map, a proprietary product of Unity Church and Unity Consulting. Spirit Map is a tool that helps:
  - Individuals find their inherent spiritual strengths and discover opportunities to deepen their sense of peace, compassion, and joy.
  - Congregations celebrate their spiritual strengths and identify ways to grow their congregation's overall spiritual maturity.Our congregation's participation in Spirit Map pilots, through the 2014 and 2015 congregational surveys, made the development of this product possible.
- Provided consulting services, including on-site retreats and hourly virtual coaching, to 27 congregations over the course of the year (June 2016-May 2017), about the same as last year, and four of which were new clients.
- Gathered six Unitarian Universalist congregations in the Washington, DC, area for a joint all-day governance retreat.
- \$1,809 went to the Unity Church operating budget from Unity Consulting and Spirit Map fees June 2016 through May 2017.

## **Denominational Affairs**

Unity Church continued to grow its relationship with the larger Unitarian Universalist Association. Unity increased its financial support on the path to becoming a Fair Share congregation. Unity was asked to host the Mid-America Mosaic Makers Regional conference in August 2016, a gathering of congregations from the Mid-America region who are committed to anti-racism, anti-oppression and multi-cultural work. Unity Church served as the fiscal agent for Black Lives of UU in their early stages of organization and supported a group of members to attend the BLUU convening in New Orleans. Unity Church hosted a metro-area forum for UUA Presidential candidate Rev. Jeanne Pupke in April. Unity sent a large delegation of members to participate in the June 2017 General Assembly. There is increased collaboration among metro area UU congregations in shared programming, training for boards and teacher cafes, Coming of Age gatherings, and more.

Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs served on the UUA Board as Secretary of the Association and retired from the Board in June 2017 after 40 years of volunteer service to the larger movement. Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs continued her years of service as a UUA Transitions Consultant to congregations in ministerial search. Rev. Lisa Friedman began a two year term as UU History and Theology faculty at the Midwest UU Leadership School. All of Unity's ministers serve as mentors to colleagues in preliminary fellowship and support the profession of ministry in a variety of ways.

## **Finances / Resource Development**

This annual report to the congregation includes highlights and accomplishments of the 2016-2017 church year. A report in the area of finances/resource development defies this timeline because the church's fiscal year is a calendar year. We are including highlights of Fiscal Year 2016, statements of financial condition as of December 31, 2016, as prepared by Schechter, Dokken, Kanter CPA, and an update of 2017 resource development through June.

### **Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017**

#### **Sunday Offerings**

We received a total of \$116,647 in Sunday Offerings in 2016. \$68,205 was given to community organizations that were nominated by our members and friends. \$14,722 was earmarked for dedicated Unity Church funds like the Justice Learning Scholarship Fund, the Arthur Foote Music Fund, the Hallman Endowment, the Partner Church Team, and Chalice Camp. The remaining \$33,720 went to the operating budget to support our Community Outreach programming.

#### **Operating Pledges**

Our 2016 Operating budget pledge goal was \$1,279,000 and we ended the year with \$1,266,181 in pledges. We projected that 4% of the pledges would be uncollectible and collected all but 2.8% of the pledges.

Our 2017 Operating budget pledge goal is \$1,310,000. As of the writing of this report, we have made our goal for 2017 operating pledges. Thank you to the 744 households who have provided generous support.

**Unrestricted Year-End Gifts** totaled \$24,115 in 2016.

#### **Capital Pledges**

In the fall of 2014 we introduced capital pledging, which enables us to shield the operating budget from debt service, strengthen our long-term note negotiations with banks, and pay for capital repairs and improvements. In 2016 and 2017, members and friends made \$224,980 and \$238,895 in capital pledges respectively. We expended capital pledge receipts for the Sanctuary sprinkler project in 2016, wood renewal at the main entry in 2017, new furniture for the Robbins Parlor, additional choir room cabinets, and debt service payments in 2017.

### **Unity Tomorrow Capital Campaign / Long Term Debt**

We have been enjoying our newly renovated building since the *Unity Tomorrow* capital project was completed in 2012. Through the generous contributions of Unity Church members and friends, we were able to modernize our infrastructure, upgrade the kitchen, add restrooms and create a beautiful and welcoming main entrance.

In November of 2011, the congregation voted to move forward with the *Unity Tomorrow* capital project with the goal of attaining \$8 million in pledges, and constructing the three key

elements of the project. At a special meeting of the congregation in April, 2012 a resolution was passed that the “debt in the project be limited to the cost of short-term construction financing and long term financing such that scheduled repayments shall not exceed more than 10% of the annual operating budget of the church, and authorize such encumbrances as are necessary to secure such financing and such liens as are customary industry practice.”

The *Unity Tomorrow* project cost \$8 million. Total *Unity Tomorrow* commitments from 2011 – 2016 were \$6,874,342 and by the end of December, 2016 we had collected \$6,653,734 or 96.8% of the amount promised.

After paying principal and interest on the short term construction loan for 4.5 years, we converted the remaining \$1,950,000 to a long term note on January 1, 2017. This is a five year note with Western Bank based on a 20 year amortization schedule. Interest is fixed at 4.0% and debt service payments are \$142,500 per year from 2017-2021. Our capital pledges are adequate to cover this debt service without impact to programming, and we are allowed to make additional principal payments of up to 20% of the remaining balance annually.

We will need to refinance the note at the end of five years with either the current or another bank, without prepayment penalty. If we are able to make additional principal payments (in addition to the regularly scheduled debt service payments) before refinancing, we will have more favorable options. At that time, the factors in play will be the remaining principal balance, interest rates, and our tolerance for debt, which will determine the number of years over which to amortize the loan.

### **Fiscal Agent Agreements**

In 2016-2017, we continued to act as fiscal agent for two community partner groups that secured funding from The Saint Paul Foundation. The Circle of Peace Movement, a well-established partner, focuses on the continuing need for violence reduction and racial healing in St. Paul. Michael Johnson of New Star Aviation was awarded a grant by The Saint Paul Foundation in 2015 and we served in the role of fiscal agent until December 2016. New Star Aviation helps share new aerospace opportunities and first flight experiences with the diverse student populations that are often beyond the reach of typical inclusion efforts. We also agreed to provide fiscal agent services for Black Lives UU, Revive Love Tour, and a Circle of Peace contract with AccessAbility in 2016-2017.

**The Heritage Society** is made up of members and friends who have remembered Unity Church in their estate plans. These legacy gifts ensure the future of the church. William Doherty was our keynote speaker at the annual Heritage Society dinner in May of 2017.



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*Financial statements of:*

**UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL**

Years ended  
December 31, 2016 and 2015

**SDK**  
Schechter Dokken Kanter  

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**CPAs ■ Business Advisors**

**UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL**  
(See Independent Accountant's Review Report)

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
<b>Assets:</b>		
Current assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 57,798	\$ 82,793
Pledges receivable:		
Current portion:		
Operating pledges, net	1,056,555	1,026,524
Unity Tomorrow capital campaign commitments, net		82,435
Capital pledges, net	181,720	211,661
Other receivables	42,450	49,421
Investments		22,741
Prepaid expenses	22,681	10,782
Property held-for-sale		<u>195,000</u>
Total current assets	<u>1,361,204</u>	<u>1,681,357</u>
Property and equipment:		
Land and land improvements	180,070	167,320
Buildings and building improvements	11,728,024	11,536,207
Equipment	820,921	805,648
Artwork	<u>81,300</u>	<u>81,300</u>
	12,810,315	12,590,475
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>3,922,385</u>	<u>3,683,946</u>
	<u>8,887,930</u>	<u>8,906,529</u>
Other assets:		
Cash restricted for long-term purposes	235,864	228,925
Operating pledges, net of current portion	540,965	922,846
Capital pledges, net of current portion	95,794	196,900
Endowment investments	775,266	657,718
St. Paul Foundation holdings	125,001	122,805
Beneficial interest in Diether perpetual trust	<u>445,990</u>	<u>439,960</u>
	<u>2,218,880</u>	<u>2,569,154</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 12,468,014</u>	<u>\$ 13,157,040</u>

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
DECEMBER 31

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
<b><i>Liabilities and net assets:</i></b>		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable	\$ 19,178	\$ 27,134
Accrued expenses	84,357	84,568
Current portion:		
Long-term debt	64,624	300,000
Capital lease obligation	6,425	6,003
Total current liabilities	<u>174,584</u>	<u>417,705</u>
Capital lease obligation, net of current portion	17,453	23,877
Long-term debt, net of current portion	1,878,138	1,941,435
Loan from donor advised fund	<u>195,423</u>	<u>214,288</u>
Total liabilities	<u>2,265,598</u>	<u>2,597,305</u>
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	998,089	825,011
Temporarily restricted	7,944,833	8,516,992
Permanently restricted	<u>1,259,494</u>	<u>1,217,732</u>
Total net assets	<u>10,202,416</u>	<u>10,559,735</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 12,468,014</u>	<u>\$ 13,157,040</u>

**UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL**  
(See Independent Accountant's Review Report)

	2016			Total
	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily restricted</u>	<u>Permanently restricted</u>	
Support and revenue:				
Pledges and gifts	\$ 187,473	\$ 1,360,700	\$ 25,805	\$ 1,573,978
Sunday collections	33,720	120,952		154,672
Grants		100,000		100,000
Program fees	83,553			83,553
Investment income (loss)	22,691	27,756	7,731	58,178
Change in value of:				
St. Paul Foundation holdings			2,196	2,196
Diether perpetual trust			6,030	6,030
Rental income	45,809			45,809
Unity consulting income	81,185			81,185
Miscellaneous income	57,699			57,699
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>2,181,567</u>	<u>(2,181,567)</u>		
Total support and revenue	<u>2,693,697</u>	<u>(572,159)</u>	<u>41,762</u>	<u>2,163,300</u>
Expenses:				
Program	2,004,225			2,004,225
Management and general	435,476			435,476
Fundraising	<u>80,918</u>			<u>80,918</u>
Total expenses	<u>2,520,619</u>			<u>2,520,619</u>
Change in net assets	173,078	(572,159)	41,762	(357,319)
Net assets, beginning	<u>825,011</u>	<u>8,516,992</u>	<u>1,217,732</u>	<u>10,559,735</u>
Net assets, ending	<u>\$ 998,089</u>	<u>\$ 7,944,833</u>	<u>\$ 1,259,494</u>	<u>\$ 10,202,416</u>

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS  
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31

2015			
<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily restricted</u>	<u>Permanently restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
\$ 185,473	\$ 1,175,501	\$ 29,286	\$ 1,390,260
26,589	123,188		149,777
70,170			70,170
22,693	(7,398)	(1,593)	13,702
		(6,630)	(6,630)
		(38,998)	(38,998)
36,607			36,607
87,521			87,521
11,750			11,750
<u>1,899,161</u>	<u>(1,899,161)</u>		
<u>2,339,964</u>	<u>(607,870)</u>	<u>(17,935)</u>	<u>1,714,159</u>
1,855,753			1,855,753
403,211			403,211
<u>69,533</u>			<u>69,533</u>
<u>2,328,497</u>			<u>2,328,497</u>
11,467	(607,870)	(17,935)	(614,338)
<u>813,544</u>	<u>9,124,862</u>	<u>1,235,667</u>	<u>11,174,073</u>
<u>\$ 825,011</u>	<u>\$ 8,516,992</u>	<u>\$ 1,217,732</u>	<u>\$ 10,559,735</u>

**UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL**  
(See Independent Accountant's Review Report)

	2016			
	Program	Management and general	Fundraising	Total
Salaries	\$ 570,523	\$ 150,480	\$ 43,442	\$ 764,445
Payroll taxes and benefits	<u>195,061</u>	<u>61,504</u>	<u>13,676</u>	<u>270,241</u>
Total salaries and related expenses	765,584	211,984	57,118	1,034,686
Bad debt expense		36,372		36,372
Bank fees		17,051	17	17,068
Unity consulting fees	71,421			71,421
Dues & subscriptions	32,676	115	29	32,821
Insurance	18,558	718	116	19,392
Interest		118,708		118,708
Office equipment		4,197		4,197
Other professional fees	50,313	16,837	75	67,225
Professional development	23,386	4,624	2,049	30,059
Program expenses	683,029	971	12,046	696,046
Property tax assessments	11,302	191	1,828	13,321
Repairs & maintenance	34,834	1,137	3,878	39,849
Supplies	17,598	9,603	670	27,871
Telephone & communication	10,454	1,927	642	13,023
Utilities	57,238	2,018	867	60,123
Gain on disposal of property and equipment				
Total expenses before depreciation	1,776,393	426,453	79,335	2,282,182
Depreciation	<u>227,832</u>	<u>9,023</u>	<u>1,583</u>	<u>238,437</u>
Total expenses	<u>\$ 2,004,225</u>	<u>\$ 435,476</u>	<u>\$ 80,918</u>	<u>\$ 2,520,619</u>
Percentage of total expenses	80%	17%	3%	100%

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES  
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31

2015			
Program	Management and general	Fundraising	Total
\$ 581,477	\$ 156,358	\$ 38,934	\$ 776,769
<u>206,752</u>	<u>53,815</u>	<u>12,581</u>	<u>273,148</u>
788,229	210,173	51,515	1,049,917
	17,529		17,529
74,781			74,781
24,870	40	10	24,920
21,230	821	133	22,184
	122,577		122,577
	8,777		8,777
51,209	15,536	4,355	71,100
25,104	3,340	1,482	29,926
532,287	1,340	8,994	542,621
11,571	169	28	11,768
30,044	1,018	165	31,227
14,710	9,681	510	24,901
9,088	1,658	552	11,298
52,867	1,871	303	55,041
<u>(2,656)</u>	<u>(103)</u>	<u>(16)</u>	<u>(2,775)</u>
1,633,334	394,427	68,031	2,095,792
<u>222,419</u>	<u>8,784</u>	<u>1,502</u>	<u>232,705</u>
<u>\$ 1,855,753</u>	<u>\$ 403,211</u>	<u>\$ 69,533</u>	<u>\$ 2,328,497</u>
80%	17%	3%	100%

**UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL**  
(See Independent Accountant's Review Report)

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS  
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ (357,319)	\$ (614,338)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	238,437	232,705
Accretion of financing costs	17,029	8,522
Loss (gain) on disposal of property and equipment		(2,775)
Donated investments	(9,606)	(1,728)
Loss on sale of property	36,253	
Contribution of property		(195,000)
Permanently restricted contributions	(6,939)	(11,299)
Unrealized (gain) loss on investments	(35,487)	8,987
Change in value of:		
St. Paul Foundation holdings	(2,196)	6,630
Beneficial interest in perpetual trust	(6,030)	38,998
(Increase) decrease in assets:		
Pledges receivable	565,332	748,748
Other receivables	6,971	12,412
Prepaid expenses	(11,899)	3,529
Increase (decrease) in liabilities:		
Accounts payable	(7,956)	(8,527)
Accrued expenses	(211)	(12,213)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>426,379</u>	<u>214,651</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchase of:		
Property and equipment	(219,839)	(45,901)
Investments	(49,714)	(14,056)
Proceeds from sale of:		
Investments		22,775
Contributed property	158,748	
Restriction of cash for long-term purposes	(6,939)	(11,299)
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(117,744)</u>	<u>(48,481)</u>

**UNITY CHURCH OF ST. PAUL**  
(See Independent Accountant's Review Report)

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS  
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Loan origination fees	\$ (7,238)	
Payments on:		
Loan from donor advised fund	(18,865)	\$ (17,987)
Long-term debt	(308,464)	(400,000)
Capital lease obligation	(6,002)	(11,410)
Permanently restricted contributions	<u>6,939</u>	<u>11,299</u>
Net cash used in financing activities	<u>(333,630)</u>	<u>(418,098)</u>
Net (decrease) increase in cash	(24,995)	(251,928)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning	<u>82,793</u>	<u>334,721</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, ending	<u>\$ 57,798</u>	<u>\$ 82,793</u>
Supplemental disclosure of cash flow information:		
Cash paid for interest	<u>\$ 101,679</u>	<u>\$ 114,055</u>
Non-cash investing and financing activity:		
Assets acquired under capital lease		<u>\$ 33,199</u>

## **Administration**

The administrative staff is a hard-working, talented team of people who support every aspect of church life. Martha Tilton, Coordinator of Communications; Song Thao, Financial Assistant; Michelle Mecey, Accounting Specialist and Madeline Summers, Wedding/Memorial Coordinator comprise our administrative team. In May – July of 2016, Executive Director Barbara Hubbard took a two month sabbatical leave during which the administrative staff took on extra responsibility for the operations of the church.

Our paid staff is supported by dedicated and hard-working front desk volunteers who play an important role in greeting people, answering phone calls, and helping with various projects. This beloved team of volunteers is coordinated by Sharon Merritt and Joan Carver.

The Memorial Service Reception team, led by Barbara Ford, serves a critical role in providing food and support for memorial service receptions, and we are very grateful for their work.

In 2016-2017, our Art Team continued its important and creative work. Under the leadership of Marty Rossmann and Paul Rogne, the Art Team adeptly performed the work of managing and displaying our permanent collection, choosing monthly Parish Hall artist shows, and made decisions about the acquisition of new art. Thank you to all of the Art Team members for a remarkable year!

## Facilities

Our hard-working, dedicated facilities staff was kept very busy in the 2016-2017 church year supporting the program and worship life of the church and the growing number of events that are held in the building by community groups. Additionally, they accomplished maintenance projects, including cleaning, repair, painting, snow removal, and grounds maintenance at both the church and the church-owned duplex. The staff welcomed Emma Mathews-Lingen, and we said farewell and thank you to long-time employee, Harold Watson, who left for another opportunity.

Led by Ethel Griggs, our Garden Group worked diligently to provide beautiful landscaping, particularly in the courtyard at Grotto and Portland, and we were awarded a Blooming St. Paul award for our fabulous gardens! Other individuals continued to move us toward sustainable recycling and composting systems, and we continue to provide a level one fast charging station for electric vehicles.

One Voice Mixed Chorus rents office, rehearsal, and meeting space at Unity Church. Above Every Name continues to worship at Unity on Sunday afternoons. Unity also hosts the Minnesota Hungarians who hold occasional dinners, dances, and fundraisers at the church and have added Hungarian language classes for children. The New Century Club holds meetings at Unity, as well as various 12-step groups. In the 2016-2017 year, Medley Village Preschool, Twin Cities Guitarists, and Music Together also made Unity Church their home!

Our Archive Team continued to sort through and file archival material in the lower level storage area. The Minnesota Historical Society has agreed to store some of our materials there and our team facilitated the transfer.

Our Emergency Preparedness Team, assembled in 2015, continued its important work in evaluating the safety and security of our building and writing and implementing an Emergency Action Plan. Leah Doherty, Rob Fulton, Richard Birger, and staff members Bill Lowell and Barbara Hubbard met regularly to create a position of readiness in the event of medical emergencies, fire, weather, loss of power, persons showing inappropriate behavior, suspicious packages, bomb threats, and active shooters. Defibrillators and evacuation chairs were purchased. The team has been training staff, tenants, front desk volunteers and other lay people in "Situational Awareness."

## Policy J Report: Anti-Racism and Racial Healing Commitment

The Executive Team shall not take actions or otherwise conduct the affairs of Unity Church-Unitarian in any manner that does not comport with its commitment to becoming an actively anti-racist institution. The Executive Team shall not:

1. Engage vendors in an amount greater than \$2,500 annually without assessing and educating any such vendor using a matrix of values which includes, but is not limited to anti-racism, anti-oppression, multiculturalism and class inclusion.

*In response to this policy, the Executive Team has, or intends to:*

- *Developed and implemented a matrix of criteria that expresses the church's stated values and ends including minority hiring practices, sustainability practices, commitment to the local community, worker's equity and competitive fees.*
- *Survey current contractors and vendors to evaluate their compliance with our criteria.*
- *Create required goals for our current vendors and contractors who are not in compliance, thus challenging and educating them;*
- *Apply the criteria to all future processes for the selection of contracted services and vendors.*
- *Report results to the Board of Trustees and the congregation annually in an effort to be accountable and transparent.*

2. Allow the Board to be uninformed about diversity of staff on payroll, including the percentage of positions and salary paid to people of color.

*As of January 2017 our staff was comprised of 33% people of color (7 of 21), and 25% of salaries are assigned to people of color.*

3. Allow staff members to be uninformed about how to conduct their duties in alignment with the anti-racism, anti-oppression, multiculturalism and class inclusion values of Unity Church-Unitarian.

*We dedicate a segment of our all staff retreat to cultural awareness. We have also incorporated anti-racism awareness and work into our Staff Norms and discuss these issues and practices often at our weekly staff meetings.*

4. Interpret the Ends statements without consideration of the anti-racism commitment of Unity Church-Unitarian and how that commitment is implemented in covenant with local communities of color.

*As you can see from the ET's Interpretation of the Ends, Unity's anti-racism commitment is woven throughout the work.*

5. Allow the congregation to be uninformed about the work being done to live out the anti-racism, anti-oppression, multicultural and class inclusive values of Unity Church-Unitarian, and the measurable outcomes of that work, including the percentage of Sunday Offerings that go to organizations with an anti-racist agenda and/or that serve communities of color.

*Our Beloved Community Team, made up of staff and lay members, has been formed to provide planning, oversight and program development to strengthen and expand Unity's efforts to be a credible partner in the work. Erika Sanders and Pauline Eichten are "reporters" to document and share our efforts with the congregation.*

**Annual Report for the 2016-2017 Church Year  
from the  
Anti-Racism Leadership Team  
to the Board of Trustees and the Executive Team  
Recommendation**

The ARLT has been tasked to measure Unity's progress towards becoming an anti-racist institution, and embedding anti-racism into the ongoing work of the church. Regarding our past year's efforts in executing this mission, you may read more below. However, the most important insight we have gained is that our attempts at measurement — worthy and worthwhile as they may be — recall the old parable about the five blind men trying to describe an elephant. We can speak to some of the details, but the larger picture of Unity's embrace and embedding of the work of anti-racism is something of a mystery. What is the sum of these parts? What does the elephant look like?

The need to answer this question has never been more urgent. The ideology of white supremacy is being pressed upon the country in a more overt and threatening manner than any time in the past forty years. At the same time, awareness of this ideology's insidious and pervasive role in our society is also growing. In its more insidious guise, white supremacy provoked a major leadership crisis in American Unitarian Universalism.

Closer to home, Unity's Congregational Survey has revealed a significant and continuing gap between how our white families and families of color view Unity's progress in fulfilling its ends. At every level, both the peril of white supremacy and the opportunity to confront it have never been more pressing. Add to this the fact that Unity Church is on the verge of a transition in leadership, and the imperative to decisively, and steadily, continue to build an anti-racist community is clearer still.

**Our primary recommendation is that the Board of Trustees ensure that the church has a clearly-articulated vision of what it means to be an anti-racist institution, and a documented, integrated strategic plan designed to fulfill that vision.**

We believe a documented strategic plan should include the following:

- A fact-based assessment of the current situation including congregational attitudes
- Identification of elements required for success
- Clear priorities, with clear choices about where and how the church will move forward
- Planned, integrated actions that are consistent with the situation, objectives and resources
- An execution timeline that reflects appropriate urgency, with clear and credible milestones
- Clearly assigned accountabilities

The strategic plan should also address the issue of the upcoming leadership transition and document the strategies that the church leadership will use to ensure the viability and maintenance of Unity as an anti-racist organization through and beyond the transition period.

### **Area Reports**

The ARLT devised a set of questions, and assigned individual members to interview representatives from these three areas: Executive Director, Adult Education and Community Outreach Teams, and Ministerial/Worship Team. (The fourth area, Religious Education, will be part of next year's reporting.) Summaries of these interviews follow, below. We found each area to be fully cognizant of, and deeply engaged in, the challenges of incorporating and extending Unity's commitment to anti-racism. However, though these interviews very informative and useful in establishing baselines for each area's future efforts, they highlighted the need to develop a more coherent, overarching strategy.

### **Executive Director**

The Executive Director's role in moving Unity Church toward achieving its vision of becoming an anti-racist organization is primarily in the areas of:

- Control of the financial and physical resources of the organization;
- Administration and support, including education and training, for the human resources of the organization;
- Documentation of the policies and processes of the organization.

A significant way that the ED supports the vision is by being deliberate and thoughtful in how Unity shares its physical space with other groups. The ED works to ensure that Unity is responsive, transparent and welcoming to communities of color who inquire about using our space. This is also an important way that Unity builds partnerships with communities of color. Unity has become an important resource to the community, with that role growing since 2012. Because of our intimate and trusting relationship with BLM, Unity has been a source of refuge and renewal for activists and organizers in the movement. Unity Church is home to The Circle of Peace movement, Church of the Larger Fellowship, Black Lives UU, and Above Every Name. Unity's proximity to the Governor's Mansion is, in itself, an asset to community groups. (For example, we provided space for Leon Wang's activist group for pre-march activities before they went to protest at the mansion.) If a group cannot afford our standard fees we work with them to figure something out, and have discounted fees, or even provided space for free (as in the case of Black Lives Matter). Unity is on a list of churches committed to housing individual(s) seeking sanctuary and has created a comfortable space, including a shower, for this purpose.

The ED also supports Unity's anti-racist vision by being deliberate in how and with whom we spend our money. Policy J is perhaps the most prominent example of how anti-racism is embedded in the church's policies. If Unity spends more than \$2,500 annually with a vendor, or if Unity is hiring a new vendor, management is required to ask the Policy J questions. There are five criteria, including minority hiring, sustainability practices, local engagement, worker's equity in fair compensation, and competitive fees for goods and services. Policy J was applied

this year in the refinancing of the church's \$1.95M long-term note, and the processes for hiring a consultant to help us work through the upcoming transitions in church leadership. Policy J also requires an annual internal assessment of people of color (POC) on staff and POC salaries, which is reported to the Board of Trustees.

Moving into next year, the ARLT will continue to build on its understanding of this area by considering the ways in which the budget does or does not reflect an anti-racism vision, how well the church has documented anti-racist policies and expectations, and how the anti-racist vision and aspiration are incorporated into the leadership transition work.

### **Adult Education and Community Outreach**

The Adult Education and Community Outreach area includes:

- Ongoing adult education efforts, such as Wellspring Wednesdays;
- Special educational programs, such as Beloved Conversations;
- Community Outreach teams, including the Restorative Justice Ministry Team, Affordable Housing Team, etc.

In 2016-2017, Wellspring Wednesday continued to devote 25% of its programming to anti-racism/racial justice issues. Examples from the past year include the three-part "Reading, Writing, and Talking About Race" series. The "Old, Strong Stories" series has provided an opportunity to reach out and explore beyond theological borders.

The Congregational Book Read has provided another opportunity to present anti-racist perspectives to adult congregants; the last two selections have been *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates (2016), and *All the Real Indians Died Off" and 20 Other Myths About Native Americans*, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitaker. Indigenous communities' issues have been the focus of other recent efforts, including a tour of Dakota sacred sites, and Unity's support for (and members' participation in) the Standing Rock protests.

The Outreach Teams are becoming "increasingly aware of the intersectionality of their work." The Evergreen Quilters have raised money for the Jeremiah Project and Obama Elementary, and the Affordable Housing Ministry Team continues its longstanding partnerships with organizations like the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative and Project Home. The Generosity Ministry Team has been asked to contribute to the Executive Team's reporting on Policy J.

Looking ahead, the Executive Team's Anti-Racism/Beloved Community committee is considering IDI training for Outreach Teams. The Outreach Teams themselves are, in some sense, Unity's "best-kept secrets," and though they have been incorporated into the "Finding Yourself at Unity" curriculum, the congregation might be made more aware of the work they do. Finally, a "life-span faith development" program is being developed in collaboration with KP Hong. The guiding question is, "What would Religious Education look like if it didn't stop at 18?" The aim is to build a bridge between RE and adult education, including aligning calendars.

## **Ministerial / Worship Team**

The Ministerial / Worship Team includes:

- Unity's ministers
- Director of Music Ministry
- Ministerial interns

The following actions have been taken in the last year to embed anti-racism actions, teachings, and messages in the work of the Worship Team.

Consistent with the mission of the church to become an anti-racist community, the Worship Team coordinates all aspects of ministry, including readings, music, sermons, offerings, etc. to embed anti-racist themes into all church programming. An anti-racist focus is also encouraged in the contributions of Worship Associates. Unitarian Universalist theology provides a basis for holding the ministers accountable to this work, and to educate and hold accountable the congregation to contribute to Unity's goal of being an anti-racist institution.

The introduction of the evening group that combined the ministry of Unity with the ministry of Above Every Name is an example of a church program that combined theology, opportunity, and relationship in a vehicle for congregants to deepen and broaden their understanding of the theology and religious traditions of an African American church. The Worship Team has also created year-long programming that incorporates an anti-racist message into each week's church activities. In addition to weekly services, examples include films and guest speakers

Unity's music ministry supports worship themes and works to broaden the scope of anti-racism by introducing choirs and musicians who take part in services, as well as congregants, to other cultures' and peoples' music and musical expression. These efforts expand the choirs' repertoire and appreciation of different types of music, and bring to the congregants a deeper and richer understanding of diverse cultures. At the same time, care is taken to respect these traditions, and to avoid cultural appropriation. The music ministry has also embarked on a creating a filing system of all music offered in the church, and has suggested that cultural annotations could be included in this filing system.

There is a tension between nourishing anti-racist activism and remaining cognizant of congregants' fears and discomfort with the work. The Worship Team is aware that balance is necessary to continue the progress of individual members, the congregation as a whole, and the church as an institution in embracing Unity's anti-racism efforts. It is necessary to step into some level of discomfort in order to grow, but creating too much discomfort will cause some congregants (and choir members) to back away.

Because anti-racism work requires a steadfast commitment, the Worship Team carries on this effort on a number of fronts, including:

- Setting a tone through the integration of readings reflecting the global majority into worship services

- Choosing anti-racist books for the bookstall / Offering programs on anti-racist themes / Encouraging congregants to speak and act for social justice, and for restorative justice
- Centering some of the sermons on race based disparities
- Creating smaller, more intimate worship venues for congregants to explore and build a genuine anti-racist movement among congregants (for example, with Above Every Name).